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PEOPLE, RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

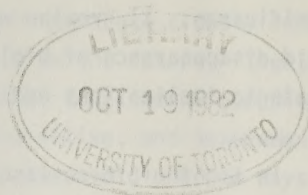
Perspectives on the Uses and Management
of the Lancaster Sound Region

Government
Publications

by

Peter Jacobs
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Introduction

People, Resources and the Environment documents the public review phase of the Lancaster Sound Regional Study, which followed the release of the draft green paper, *The Lancaster Sound Region: 1980-2000*.

The Lancaster Sound Regional Study was set up to assemble all available information on the region and examine the issues of people, environment and resources against this data. This was synthesized into a draft green paper whose purpose was to stimulate thorough public discussion, regionally and nationally. The draft green paper asked Canadians: What do you believe is our best plan for Lancaster Sound?

The review phase that followed, including visits to the communities affected and workshops in Resolute and Ottawa, was the public's opportunity to respond.

In his report to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the chairman of the public review, Professor Peter Jacobs, presents the nature and substance of this public discussion. His recommendations will contribute to the preparation of the final green paper, which should explain the importance of the region and outline alternatives for its use and management.

The Lancaster Sound Region in Context

Evaluation of options for the use and management of the region first requires an understanding of global perspectives. Three issues are of international significance: i) growing world demand for raw materials and energy, ii) the rapid disappearance of biologically undisturbed environments, and iii) the strategic implications and importance of the Arctic to other nations.

- 3* In light of these issues of international significance, options for the use and management of the region should consider the global implications of the conservation or the use of renewable and non-renewable resources of the high Arctic and address the issue of sovereignty and control where appropriate.

The national objectives for the North outlined in Canada's North 1970-1980 called for a higher standard of living and opportunity for northern peoples, compatible with their own aspirations; an enhanced northern environment; and viable economic development for the national well-being. Emphasis among these has shifted, reflecting the government's concern for energy self-sufficiency.

There is, however, a confusing absence of co-ordinated government policy for the region and a pressing need to clarify existing policies and develop new ones. Therefore,

- 4 the use and management of the region should be discussed with reference to existing national policy. Policy, policy conflicts, and the absence of national policy should be discussed for all major issues in the green paper; further,
- 5 appropriate attention should be given to a clear analysis of the projected local economic, social, and ecological benefits of each option.

* Numbers refer to actual designation of recommendation in the report. Not all recommendations are detailed in this summary.

Inuit insist that land claims must be settled before any further industrial development is permitted so that they are able to participate fully in the planning and decision-making process. There was strong support for the importance of addressing land claims in the green paper, as settlement of claims and participation in the decision-making process are closely related to the maintenance of lifestyle options for Inuit in the future. Thus, any development that reduces hunting, fishing and other traditional pursuits is unacceptable. Both workshops supported this perspective, and government policy recognizes the right of Inuit to choose between old and new ways. Therefore,

- 6 the position of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC), the Baffin Region Inuit Association (BRIA), and the communities regarding land claims as they affect development in the region should be noted in the green paper, and mention made of the current negotiations; as well,
- 7 impacts on the existing and future pursuit of traditional activities and the need and aspirations of local Inuit communities with respect to their own social, cultural and economic development should be analyzed for each option in the green paper.

Perspectives on the Use of Lancaster Sound

Four questions were presented in the draft green paper to guide public discussion. They were: Should new industrial development be deferred pending improved technology and understanding of environmental, social and economic relationships? Should parks be designated before industrial development? Should year-round shipping of gas and oil be allowed now? Should there be a determined resource development program? These questions were based on four concerns reflecting perspectives in Canadian society: national interest, environmental protection, lifestyle flexibility, and appropriate technology.

Early in the public review phase, Inuit stated it was difficult to answer the questions when no policies or options were presented in the draft green paper. At the final workshop in Ottawa, therefore, the following sample options were put forward for discussion by the Lancaster Sound working group: postpone new development for at least five years; promote conservation and education immediately, while postponing development; initiate industrial development on a limited basis; and, promote all viable development within existing regulations. During the public review it was agreed that,

- 9 the elaboration and discussion of options for the use of Lancaster Sound should be explained with respect to existing government policy on energy and the North, and goals developed for each option; further,
- 10 options for Lancaster Sound should include an option not to develop industrial activities, and the impacts of this discussed in the green paper.

Public review during the community meetings and workshops focused on development of non-renewable resources, Inuit uses of renewable resources, and the impacts of the former on the activities of the latter. The mining industry, arguing that modern mining technology is safe, relatively clean, and harmless, opposed the designation of parks before development. The oil and gas industry depends on year-round shipping and is convinced that the design and development of an environmentally safe arctic tanker is technically quite feasible. Dome Petroleum stated that it intends to develop a transportation system to ship oil through the high Arctic to southern markets by 1986. Therefore,

- 11 the possibility of accelerated year-round shipping of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and oil should be clearly identified in the green paper and the associated social and ecological impacts fully detailed.

Potential conflicts between native lifestyle and plans for development were among the concerns expressed by conservation interests. In addition, discussion focused on the limited ecological predictive capability, untested technology, the inappropriateness of the region as an area for experimentation, and the need for long-term stable economic solutions based on the use of renewable resources. It was proposed that conservation should not be viewed as a discrete activity, but as a cross-sectorial process affecting all activity in the North. Thus,

- 12 options for the future of Lancaster Sound based on renewable resource use should be developed and the associated impacts fully detailed;
- 13 a conservation strategy should be developed for each option and relative priorities for conservation activities identified; and
- 14 the relationship between development, conservation, land claims, existing agreements and policies, and community views of possible environmental impacts should be discussed for each option.

Management of the Region: A Consensus

Public consensus was expressed in support of an ongoing planning process for the high Arctic, especially Lancaster Sound. The planning process should be based on explicit principles and objectives, with participation reflecting community and regional, as well as national interest.

Industry insisted on the need for an effective and expeditious process that would not supersede established evaluation processes. Inuit endorsed the regional planning process, subject to three conditions: settlement of land claims, full participation in the planning process and the adoption of planning principles such as those established by a Canadian Arctic Resources Committee sponsored workshop in 1979.

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has recently initiated a northern land use planning policy which recognizes the national importance of non-renewable resource exploitation, the socio-economic significance of protecting the traditional land base for native use, and the national interest in environmental conservation. As a land use planning policy framework will contribute to the co-ordination and integration of many of the issues affecting the high Arctic, the public review recommended that

- 15 the green paper should incorporate aspects of the northern land use planning policy, illustrating its relevance to the Lancaster Sound region; and that
- 16 the proposed planning framework, outlined in the department's policy paper, should be tested forthwith in the Lancaster Sound region.

How Shall We Plan?


Consensus to plan will not necessarily result in appropriate and innovative policies, and southern planning methods may aggravate rather than alleviate problems. Planning must be adapted to the people and place for which it is intended, and decision-making processes designed in a manner free from southern paternalism and with a full understanding of underlying cultural differences. Thus,

- 17 a two-year period should be accorded to establish an operational planning format. Approvals for year-round shipping and exploratory drilling should be suspended until the process is established.

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has an "open file" in Ottawa, containing the transcripts of the public review workshops, formal submissions, letters and other written material generated during the public review. The public is invited to write for further information or to review the material in the open file.

Inquiries should be addressed to:

Dr. H.J. Dirschl,
Project Manager,
Lancaster Sound Regional Study,
Department of Indian Affairs
and Northern Development,
Room 631, North Tower,
Les Terrasses de la Chaudière,
Ottawa, Ontario. K1A 0H4



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